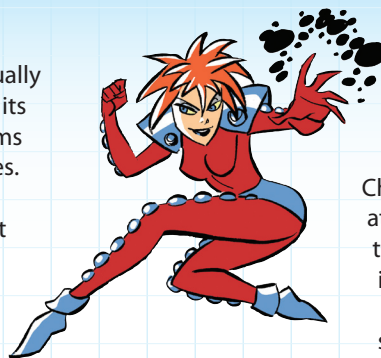


>>> IMMUNE PLATOON DISEASE DATABASE <<<

CASE FILE: BLISTER SISTERS • REAL NAME: VARICELLA-ZOSTER VIRUS • MICROBE TYPE: VIRUS

PROFILE

Varicella is the virus that causes chickenpox. It usually attacks just once in a lifetime, and most often sets its sights on kids. It's best known for making its victims itch like crazy from the rash of blisters that it causes. Once it gets going, chickenpox is very contagious, and can catch up with anyone in its path who's not immunized. Before the vaccine, about 100 people in the U.S. died each year from chickenpox. Fortunately, you can make yourself nearly invincible against chickenpox if you get the vaccine.



mineral oils that treat rashes, bumps, and bruises) can help people feel less itchy.

PREFERRED VICTIMS

Chickenpox focuses on kids, attacking mostly those younger than 15. Adults who do get infected, though, are more likely than kids to have serious complications.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Greatest Strength:
Extremely contagious.

Chickenpox's strongest power is in making victims feel sick, itchy, and miserable for a week or so. From time to time, chickenpox also pulls out some other tricks, like causing pneumonia and swelling of the brain. Luckily, only a few people ever see this side of chickenpox.

- 23 out of every 10,000 infected people will develop pneumonia.
- 1 out of every 10,000 will develop swelling of the brain.

Sinister Tricks: (1) Chickenpox sneaks in without any symptoms, so that people with chickenpox are most contagious before they even know they have it—1 to 2 days before the "pox" actually appear. (2) People help chickenpox do its dirty work by scratching their itchy blisters, which spreads infected fluid and makes more blisters. (3) Sometimes, chickenpox goes underground, hiding in your nerve cells for years. Then, it can come back in adults and cause a really painful disease called shingles.

At first, chickenpox sneaks in disguised as a cold. But soon it stamps its personal trademark on its targets—a red, itchy rash of blisters, usually showing up first on the face and chest. Once it's made its mark, it adds high fever, and blisters spread over the rest of the

body. In severe cases, blisters even show up in the mouth and ears.

PREFERRED METHOD OF ATTACK

Chickenpox is an "air and surface" attacker. The cough or sneeze of an infected person sends droplets into the air and onto surfaces. Unsuspecting people then take in the virus through the mouth or nose—either from droplets flying through the air from a sneeze or cough, or when they touch a surface that has droplets on it and then later touch their mouths or noses.

KNOWN WEAKNESSES

Greatest Weakness: Nearly powerless to penetrate the defenses of the vaccine

- Most vaccinated people (70 percent to 80 percent) will be completely protected.
- A small number (15 percent to 25 percent) of vaccinated people may still get chickenpox, but will have a milder case and a faster recovery.
- In fact, chickenpox has had to go into hiding in many states that require vaccination for school, as the number of cases has fallen by as much as 84 percent!

Once someone is infected, chickenpox cannot be stopped, but its symptoms can be treated. Cool baths and calamine lotion (which has special

PRECAUTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC

Help shield yourself and others by getting vaccinated and putting chickenpox out of business.

AREA OF OPERATIONS

Chickenpox operates globally, infecting people in all parts of the world. Chickenpox spreads quickly and easily within a group, and loves to come out when the weather starts to get nice at the end of winter and the start of spring.

CRIMINAL RECORD

Chickenpox has been doing its dirty work for a long time. The disease was first described more than 400 years ago. In 1767, an English doctor, William Heberden, realized two important things. First, he showed that chickenpox is different from the more deadly disease, smallpox. Second, he showed that once a person has had chickenpox, that person usually never gets it again (In other words, they're immune for life). The Chickenpox vaccine was first used in Japan and Korea in 1988, and became available in the U.S. in 1995. ■

